



Concordia
UNIVERSITY



John Molson
School of Business
Concordia University

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE JOHN MOLSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

The new John Molson School of Business (JMSB) Building continues in Concordia University's long and proud tradition of service to the Montreal Community. Concordia and its founding institutions have been offering business education in the downtown core since 1873.

Sir George Williams, one of the founding institutions of Concordia University, had its roots in the Education Department of the Montreal YMCA (founded in 1851). This program began formally in 1873, and it evolved into the co-educational Sir George Williams College in 1926. The YMCA Board had a pronounced business orientation and the YMCA evening educational program was very much driven by their vision of serving the community. Business courses were an important part of the offerings from the beginning of the Education Department in 1873, including courses on practical skills such as bookkeeping, stenography, and commercial mathematics, evolving with time into a much broader and more formalized curriculum.

The Montreal YMCA operated out of several rented quarters until 1873, offering an informal education program from its very early days. Its first building (1873) was on Victoria Square and it was also here that the YMCA initiated its program of evening classes. The "Y" also built on Dominion Square (1891) before relocating to Drummond Street in 1912. The Education Department thrived and grew rapidly, meeting a demand for evening education for young working men.

Sir George Williams (SGW), named for the founder of the YMCA in London, England (1844), opened its doors as a separate co-educational institution in 1926. The Faculty of Arts, Science and Commerce was formed in 1929, and by 1936 SGW offered a full four-year College program to both day and evening students, including the Bachelor of Commerce that was introduced in 1934.

The College expanded rapidly in the post-World War II years. From early practical courses it developed academic programs to provide general education in Arts, Science, and Commerce. SGW received its university charter in 1948, although it had unofficially been granting degrees since 1936. Bachelor of Science (Commerce) degrees were awarded to two students in the first graduating class of June 1937.

By 1963 the combined Faculty of Arts, Science and Commerce divided into separate faculties, reflecting what had been a practical reality for some time. The SGW Faculty of Commerce came into formal being on June 1, 1963 to be headed by its first Dean, Lewis N. Greer. At first there was a single Department, Accountancy, which had been the major emphasis of the program up to that time. However, separate departments quickly emerged in the 1960s to meet the growing need for disciplinary specialization.

At this time throughout the institution SGW made great strides in academic excellence and gave a new priority to faculty research. By the mid-sixties graduate studies were initiated. The University continued to transform itself into a broadly based major university with both national and international standing.

In the Faculty of Commerce, departments emerged in all the important business disciplines and in 1968 an

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M.B.A. was inaugurated, one of the earliest in Canada. In June 1970 there was a name change to the Faculty of Commerce & Administration.

Loyola College grew out of the English program of Collège Ste-Marie, becoming a separate institution in 1896. The Loyola College Commerce Faculty came into being in 1948, offering programs at the West End campus.

In 1974 Loyola College and Sir George Williams merged to create Concordia University. The SGW and Loyola Commerce Faculties combined after that merger, and the traditions and strengths of both were brought to Concordia. In 1979 the SGW campus component of the Concordia Faculty of Commerce & Administration moved to the Guy Métro building and in 1995 Commerce faculty remaining at Loyola joined them downtown. The Faculty has remained in the building since that time; Concordia bought the building on January 30, 1998.

In November 2000 the Faculty changed its name to the John Molson School of Business in recognition of the generosity and support of the Molson family.

Nancy Marrelli
Concordia University Archives Director
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